



# FEMA

## *Gloucester County Hazard Mitigation Programs Local Government Continues Commitment to Mitigation*

**Gloucester, VA** - Because of its proximity to the mouth of the Chesapeake Bay, Gloucester County, particularly its Guinea community, is subjected to periodic flooding from coastal storms. Flooding is exacerbated in the coastal areas because of the numerous wetlands, streams, and creeks in the County.

With three flood events over four years, the County realized the need to do something different to protect its citizens and their property. Although many families had obtained a Standard Flood Insurance Policy through the NFIP, most of the homes in the affected areas were located just inches above the ground. The limited elevation of the structures led to severe damage to hundreds of home in the community during these storms.

Shortly after Hurricane Isabel came through the County in September 2003, the County applied for its first grant through the HMGP. In the fall of 2004, Gloucester County hired a planning firm to assist with applying for and managing its storm recovery efforts. The purpose of the application was to help purchase destroyed homes to reduce future losses or to help elevate the homes where the owners wished to rebuild in the community. With the help of the planning firm, the County received its first Hazard Mitigation Grant in the spring of 2005.

In Phase one of the Isabel Hazard Mitigation Grant Program 15 properties were purchased and demolished and six homes were elevated. Phase two was awarded in the summer of 2005 and has resulted in the purchase and demolition of one additional home with work under way on the elevation of 22 additional homes. The County is also working on using its extra funding from the Isabel grants to potentially elevate an additional six homes from its FEMA-approved substitution list.

A subsequent grant provided because of flooding from Tropical Storm Gaston will allow another three homes to be elevated by the middle of 2008. A grant application for the elevation of 18 additional homes was submitted and awarded in the spring of 2007. To comply with Gloucester County's floodplain ordinances, all homes are elevated so that the first floor is at least one foot above the established Base Flood Elevation.

The County has also decided to apply for a 2008 PDM grant with the intention of purchasing five homes for clearance and creating permanent open space in some of its more problematic Zone VE areas. These will not only help reduce the potential loss of life and property in the affected areas, but will also help reduce future pollution of the Chesapeake Bay.

Additionally, the planned acquisitions will be in keeping with the Governor's initiative to acquire or conserve 400,000 additional acres of open space throughout the Commonwealth.

The acquisition of the dozens of homes that were located in various VE-10 to VE-12 zones located along the coast of Gloucester County has allowed owners to sell their homes at the fair market, pre-storm value and relocate to a safer section of the County.



Gloucester County,  
Virginia



### Quick Facts

Year:

**2003**

Sector:

**Public**

Cost:

**\$5,400,000.00 (Estimated)**

Primary Activity/Project:

**Acquisition/Buyouts**

Primary Funding:

**Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP)**